

How to get and benefit from feedback from your supervisor

1. Don't put your supervisor on the spot. Arrange a meeting to discuss your performance.
2. Before the meeting, send your supervisor an e-mail or memo that outlines what you want to discuss.
3. In the meeting ask specific questions about processes and outcomes. "What have I done so far on this project that you would like for me to repeat next time?" "What do you think I could have done differently?"
4. Repeat and rephrase what your supervisor tells you to confirm that you both have a shared understanding.
5. Keep a sense of perspective. As hard as it may be to accept, we all have areas in our professional lives that could use improvement. Accept criticism as constructive. Try not to take it personally. If your supervisor points out things that you could have done differently, try to get as much specific information as you can. There may be a difference in opinion on the best way to accomplish the task. Offer your own suggestions and solutions. Try to create an atmosphere that facilitates open discussion.
6. If deficiencies are cited, take the opportunity to discuss career development. "What skills do you think I need to develop to broaden my capacities?" "What's the best way to acquire those skills?"
7. If your supervisor is juggling so many responsibilities at the time you request a meeting that he or she can't make the time for even a brief performance discussion, keep in mind that your direct supervisor is not the only person who can give you input. You can ask questions of your colleagues, customers, project leaders, and team members.
8. Apply what you have learned from your discussions with your supervisor.
9. It is a good idea to keep a written record of feedback that you receive from your supervisor and others. It will give you something to refer to when you write your accomplishment report, have your performance discussion and plan your future goals.
10. Be the primary driver of your own development and success.

Goals + Feedback = Results
~Barry Posner